

Mem | How Sweet Are Your Words

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[0 : 00] And please join me in Psalm 119, verse number 97. Those truths about Him being brought low because of our shame, deserving the highest praise. All those wonderful truths we learn from God's Word, which ought to give us a great love and appreciation for His Word.

I'm going to show four truths tonight that I want us to rejoice together when it comes to loving God's law, loving God's Word. It says at the end of this portion of Scripture that it's sweet. I'd like to show you four ways in which the Word of God is sweet to us.

Before I get into the passage, I'd like to give a little application or tell you where I was at at the end of spending time in this passage. Thinking about Matthew 4, 4, Jesus, 40 years of temptation, or 40 days of temptation, where He is not eaten, and Satan comes to Him and He says, Man shall not live by bread alone, but everywhere that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

And considering Jesus' dependency upon the Word, Him starting His earthly ministry with this 40 days of fasting, and how central the Word of God was to His ministry, I just began to meditate and be thankful for how thankful I am to have the Bible in printed form that I could understand it.

And as I did that, it reminded me of a place that I'd been before, an Indian that I'd shared with you before. There was a school called the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, C-I-H-T-S for short, all right?

[1 : 28] And so as I was thinking about how wonderful it is to have a Bible, I emailed a man named Yangchim Sangmo, the librarian at that school, and I just wrote him and I said, I really love the Bible.

It is wonderful. And I'm wondering, do you have a copy of the Bible? Because I remember when I was there, some of the students said they didn't know. And then I just have let that go through all these years.

I've always thought I would like the no. So I thought I would share that with you. If he responds, I'll give you an update on it. But as I just sat there and meditated for a little bit, I thought, what an incredible treasure. There's nothing in all this world that we should be willing to trade for having a copy of God's Word, God revealing Himself to us.

So Jesus said that no man shall not live by bread alone. And so as we see Him fasting before these incredible challenges of Christian life, we consider the role of fasting in our own life.

This is one of the most, the single discipline that reveals the things that control us. Even Jesus' response comes from the Word of God from Deuteronomy chapter number 8. And those 40 days of fasting, we see a similarity between Him and the children of Israel in the wilderness wandering.

[2 : 36] I think we spent four Sundays on this passage in Luke when we were on it. There's just so much for us to see there. But when Satan comes to him and says, you know, you could make bread. He's saying, you could make manna.

Remember, that's something that you could do. You can have miracle bread if you want to. And he said, there's something better than miracle bread. There's something better than bunny bread.

All right? There's something better than having this. It is living from the Word of God. That every word that comes out of the mouth of God reveals God. And it's this self-revelation that we feed on.

We don't trust in bread, not even the miracle version of it, but we trust in God. So we see in that that fasting is not primarily an overcoming for a power of food upon our lives, but it's about properly valuing how necessary the Word is for our lives.

And I say that as a form of application before we get into this, because when we don't have the proper appreciation of the Word of God, when we read and it says that it's sweet, but we don't recognize it's sweet, we shouldn't move forward.

[3 : 38] Do not pass gold. Do not collect \$200, right? Stop where you're at and say, I need this. I need to recognize I have devalued the Word of God in my life, and I've elevated everything else.

And fasting would be a great way to bring you to a point where you recognize the Word is what I need. I need that, that it is the highest of priorities. And so in this passage, we have no plea given, as we've seen a lot of pleas so far, just a statement about the love of God and His Word.

We don't typically just go one verse at a time, but in this passage we're going to, because it's a statement after statement about how wonderful and how sweet God's Word is. Verse 97, Oh, how I love I thy law!

It is my meditation all the day. Though through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies, for they are ever with me, I am more understanding than all my teachers.

For thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts. I have refrained my feet from every evil way that I might keep thy word.

[4 : 40] I have not departed from thy judgments, for thou hast taught me how sweet are thy words unto my taste, yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth. Through thy precepts I get understanding, therefore I hate every false way.

So I put these truths in the four different categories, or four statements. First of all, I want you to see that the Word gained our affections because it revealed God to us. We have a strong commitment to the Word of God because it's in the Word of God that God was revealed to us.

Secondly, it's God's Word that will make us wise. And we'll see two things specifically that we've been made wise in. And that God's Word provides us what man's words cannot. That a single scripture of God's Word will provide for us more than 10,000 teachers can provide for us.

And then lastly, God's Word provides something that supersedes any of the pleasures of this world. God's Word provides something that supersedes any of the pleasures of this world.

So verse number 97, O how love I thy law. That's kind of hard for me to say in that order. O how I love I thy law.

[5 : 47] It is my meditation all the day. And so he's talking about his affection for the Word, that he meditates it all the time. He understands that the Word of God is God speaking.

God is speaking to us. God is revealing Himself. God is showing us the way of salvation. So here God is approving of this attitude of the psalmist as he expresses by inspiration of the Spirit a proper attitude towards the Word of God by the believer.

Every one of us ought to be able to say, we love His law and in it do we want to meditate, that we want to spend our time in it. I was shared, somebody shared a sermon with me some time ago called Don't Worship the Bible.

I've made reference to it before. But one of the things that it said in that sermon was, how do we expect the fruit of the early church when we value a book they didn't have more than the Holy Spirit they did have?

That's one of those nice crafted sentences that false teaching is so popular for, as Juan said the night about how important it is that we stand for right doctrine.

[6 : 51] And so it's trying to pit the Holy Spirit versus the Bible, right? Like there's ever a time in your life where you have to make that decision. You get to have one of these now, which one do you want? That's a, it's a false, it's a false dichotomy there.

But he goes on and the preacher, the man speaking, he says that there is, you have to be aware of powerless word. He said, so many of you believe in this powerless word.

Well, the only way that the Word of God lacks any power is if we refuse to believe it. Because this most certainly is not a powerless word. And the Bible claims that the Scripture is the Holy Spirit speaking to the church.

The Holy Spirit inspired the Scriptures. And so as holy, as moved, a prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

In it, he continues to speak about how Paul warned against letters that kill. And he was saying that the Bible, it kills. It's a dead book and it kills. But just a little bit of reading.

[7 : 51] A couple of verses before, a couple of verses afterwards, would show us that in the context, it was talking about what Juan was speaking about the night. That this letter that was written upon stone tablets, the Ten Commandments, its intention was to bring us to a point of recognizing that we were dead.

And then he goes on and says, we need to go off the map with the Holy Spirit. And the problem with that is that the Holy Spirit made the map. And he told us that those that work outside of the map are false teachers.

So men in here, if you're ever around a lady or a woman that speaks negatively of your wife, you need to run. All right? And believers in here, if you're around anybody who ever speaks negatively about the Word of God, you need to run or stand and defend.

Right? But you don't need to believe that. And we should be people that love the Word. That should be our heart's attitude, the same as the psalmist. It's sweet. It is my joy.

It's where my meditation is. I love the law. And it gives us joy. 1 Thessalonians 1.6. And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the Word in much affliction with the joy of the Holy Ghost.

[9 : 05] Life without joy would be unbearable. It's the way that so many people live their lives. But the Christian life is a life of many afflictions, but in them all, God sustains a joy, and He does that through revealing Himself to us through His Scriptures.

So first of all, I just want to remind you that the Word has gained our affections because it revealed God to us. Why are you always going to a Bible study at your church? Why are you always asking me if I can study the Bible with you? Why do you love this book so much?

Simply, it's because God has revealed Himself to us in this book, and so we love it. And then secondly, God's Word has made us wise. That's verse 98. Though through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies, for they are ever with me.

Then this is reiterated in verse 99, 100, 104. What has it made us wise in? Well, we know in 2 Timothy, it's told that this Holy Scriptures was able to make Timothy wise unto salvation through faith.

And so, show me outside of the Scriptures where a person could come to a saving knowledge of the Lord. Show me outside of the Scriptures how a man would know that he was dead in his sins and that Jesus died in his place and that He rose again.

[10:15] In the Old Testament books, as we refer to them, that's what Timothy was taught. So they did have the Word of God, and Timothy was taught this Word of God by his grandmother and by his mother, and through that, he was able to come to a saving knowledge of Jesus.

And so, this book has made us wise unto salvation. But then verse number 4, it says, Through thy precepts I get understanding, therefore I hate every false way.

We use a word, one single word that helps us when we talk about growing in a knowledge of something, of holiness, but learning to hate something else. We just simply call that sanctification in our life.

The Word of God gives us wisdom in the area of sanctification. Through the work of the Spirit in our lives, we not only recognize what is right and what is wrong, but we also have a desire in us to avoid which is wrong.

And God does that through His Word. That's the prayer of John 17, 16 and 17. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them. Teach them understanding.

[11:17] Teach them to hate false ways. Sanctify them through that truth. Thy Word is truth. And then so, second thing here is that we get wisdom from God's Word, and that's why we value it so highly.

And then not only do we get wisdom, but we get from God's Word, we get a wisdom that man could not provide. Verse 99, I have more understanding than all my teachers, for thy testimonies are my meditation.

Teenagers, that might be some of your favorite verses, but I think you're probably using it out of context. All right? And you think you know more than all your teachers. I tell Selah, tell your teacher that you can't come back tomorrow and you're going to need to know everything she knows today.

All right? She's never tried it. I don't know what they would say about that. But knowing more than your teachers. Was this a culture that disrespected teachers? No. Is this a passage of Scripture that's disrespecting teachers? No.

That would be contrary to it, that the Word of God provides something that couldn't be provided elsewhere. Teaching and teachers are important. Recently, I had a conversation with Coach Elrod, and I was talking to him about some things that we're needing to do, and I said, I really want to get, you know, with the men of the church outside of the building to do these projects, and I said, I know we have a lot of different teaching things going on, and he just said, I know, but let's never forget teaching is important.

[12:30] And I appreciate that. I really do. I think that was him being a good friend to say that we do not need to minimize the role of teaching in our lives. There are times that I doubt my effect in this communicating God's Word to you.

Monday mornings, Friday mornings, in about 30 minutes, all right, or less, there's times that I do that, but I never doubt the effectiveness of the preaching of God's Word.

And you shouldn't either, and it's a testimony of it. We greatly benefit from teaching, but the teaching of Scripture, God Himself is teaching us when we come to God's Word.

And even the teaching of the oldest and the wisest will fall short. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts. It wasn't an insult to age or the wisdom, but it's just saying nothing compares to the Word of God.

When I come to the Word of God, I am hearing from God. And God's Word has provided for us instruction for where to place our feet. So it provides for us what man can't provide, which is where we ought to live out our lives and take our next step.

[13 : 34] Verse 101. I have refrained my feet from every evil way that I might keep thy word. And so there's a knowledge that only comes by obedience.

We often speak about this in the reverse manner. It's saying, I have refrained my feet from every evil way that I might keep thy word. I keep my feet from every evil way in order to keep your word.

Jesus says that on the Sermon of the Mount, He tells them, that heareth, but you also have to do it. The Great Commission tells them to observe all things. What is the great hindrance to you coming back in here on Sunday and understanding what the Word of God is saying?

It has to do with your obedience to what you're hearing tonight, right? Because I heard your word, I will obey it. And in the obeying of your word, then I will have understanding of it. You stop one, you're going to stop the other.

They must come together. And God's Word provides a safe haven from temptation, which man cannot do. God's Word provides what man's words can't do for us. Verse 102, I have not departed from thy judgments, for thou hast taught me.

[14 : 40] Your best companion in a fight against temptation is God's Word, as seen in Jesus' response, the temptation. And without a shelter of the Word of God, we would just be tossed to and fro.

Man with his words, outside of the teaching of God's Word, could not build any kind of shelter for you to run in this life or in the life to come. Ephesians 4, 13 says, Till we all come in the unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God into a perfect man and to the measure of the stature of the fullness of God, that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the slight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie and wait to deceive.

Two things were mentioned, a unity of faith and a knowledge of the Son of God. And where do we get both of those? Where do we find both of these? How do we have a unity of faith? It is in the Word of God.

And where do we learn of the Son? It's in the Word of God as well. We would just be tossed to and fro. We'd have no chance. When one would speak about false doctrine, you and I would know no better if it was not for God revealing Himself through His Word and it provides a haven for us from this temptation.

And then lastly here, God's Word provides something that supersedes any of the pleasures of this world. If I was to ask Jeff Bush, what is the best dessert in the world, he would say chocolate chip cookies.

[16 : 03] We know you very well, all right? I would say chocolate-covered pretzels because that's what I talked Lisa Littlefield out of last night, a lot of them. But I told her I don't think they're any good because I ate 25 of them and I'm not feeling very good right now.

So they may not be any good. She may want to throw them out. But verse 103 says, How sweet are thy words unto my taste, yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth. So we could argue in here what is the sweetest dessert that is out there.

But it would be quite given that every one of us would know that it doesn't get sweeter than honey, right? And so that's what's being given here is like the example of what is the sweetest thing that this world can provide.

The Word of God is above that. That it has a sweetness that is above any of those things in it. Honey would be number one on the Family Feud list if they were playing this in the Bible time, all right?

Honey, that's where everybody would know that it is sweet. And the communion that we have with God in His Word is not the same as the communion that we will have with God in heaven, but it is like it.

[17 : 04] I'm going to say that again. The communion that we have with God in His Word is not the same as the communion that we will have with God in heaven, but it is like it. Because right now you see through a glass darkly, but then face to face.

So that's why I say it's not the same, but it's like it. And so I want as close as much as is available to me. I want to taste the sweetness of heaven the best that I can right now because I was created for communion with Him.

I was created for another world and I want to experience that sweet fellowship that is with Him. So I'll leave you with this. We get towards the beginning of a new year and one of the things that we often bring up is Bible reading and that we're going to do that.

We want to do that. And this is a thought that I've been dwelling over this last week is what if we didn't see Bible reading as the diet, but as the cake? What if you didn't see Bible reading?

Is this the thing that you had to do to keep you healthy because you understand that it's logical, it makes sense, you're supposed to do it? Keep that element because it's certainly true.

[18 : 12] But why don't you also realize that it's the cake that's in the refrigerator that Stephanie told you not to eat until supper and so you ate the inside of the cake and you filled paper towels in it and then you put frosting over the top of it so you could get a little bit of that cake.

What if instead of just working on your plan that will lay it out and have the phone remind you, why don't you say, God, I'm going to spend some time with nothing but your word and realize it's what I really needed in my life, that I'm going to spend some time fasting up in this year and just spending more time in the word.

I'm going to take the time that was given to something else, I'm going to put it into your word. What am I going to take out of my life that is stealing away that sweetness that I'm feeling because when you recognize or when I recognize it to be what it is, all those things that I know that I'm supposed to do in my life become the highlights of my day.

They're not drudgery. They're just something that they're like the cake. They're not the diet. I'm not looking to cheat on it but I'm looking to procrastinate on other things so I can have a little bit more time eating the chocolate pretzels or whatever it is in your life.

I've made you all hungry so I will pray now through this scripture but it is sweet and you know that and let's not be ever satisfied when we are not living as if it's sweet.

[19 : 29] Let's recognize it for it. The word of God has gained affection because it reveals God to us so we love it. God's word has made us wise. God's word provides for us that what man's words cannot and God's word provides something that supersedes any of the pleasures of this world.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father I come tonight Lord and I say with the psalmist that I do love your law but unlike the psalmist Lord I cannot say that I've meditated on it all the days of my life.

Father in recognizing how sweet and how wonderful it is Lord I want to I value it I see it that it's in the word Lord that you stir up my heart a desire to read it and I thank you for it.

Your commandments have made me wiser than my enemies. You have given me understanding of decisions that need to be made how to walk circumspectly in a filthy and spotted world.

Lord that your word has given us more understanding than any of the teachers of this world could and that your testimonies Lord there are other things that we're going to think upon not the worries of this world or not the vain speeches of man Lord but it's your words that we're going to meditate on.

[20 : 41] Father forgive me when I would allow the criticism of any person to become the source of my meditation but your holy word Lord that's what deserves to be constantly in my heart.

Lord I understand you more you give more understanding the oldest and wisest among us and those that are older and wiser in here Lord they gladly step aside recognizing that in your word Lord we hear from you.

your word has helped us save us so many times Lord from taking the wrong steps but I do not know where we would be without your guidance. We could be like the most violent of criminals or the person most steeped in any false religion but your word Lord has shown us and given us a way and because of that we have departed from the evil way Lord.

We believe what you say is right your judgments are just and you have taught us and so tonight Lord as your people we say that your word is sweet Lord is sweeter than honey to us and through your word Lord we get understanding and you cause us to hate the lesser things of this world.

In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.